ISLAM; DEEN, NOT RELIGION

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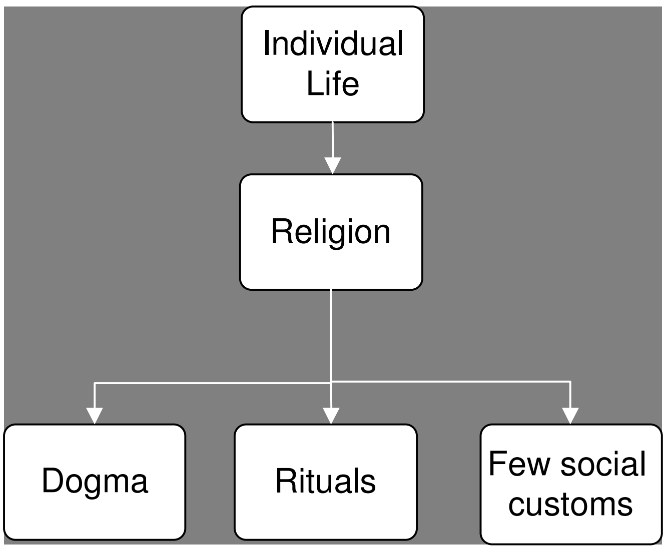
The essence of true and authentic Islamic thought consists of the idea that it is not enough to practice Islam in the personal life only, but that the teachings of the Quran and those of the Sunnah need also be implemented in their totality in the social, economic, and political fields. In other words, it implies the establishment of the sovereignty of Almighty Allah (SWT) in the "religious" as well as the "secular" domains, or the removal of the dichotomy between collective life and state authority on the one hand and Divine guidance on the other. The underlying and pervasive idea in this context, which is also an integral part of the Islamic Revolutionary Thought, is that the struggle to establish unqualified and unconditional ascendancy of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAAWS) is obligatory upon all members of the Muslim Ummah. The goal of this struggle is to achieve the domination of the True way of life (Deen al-Haq), so that the Islamic System of Social Justice - which is the most balanced synthesis of human freedom, fraternity, and equality, and which embodies the Divine attributes of Benevolence, Providence, and Justice - can be established on God's earth.

The Islamic Revolutionary Thought, briefly defined above, is often condemned and denigrated by the Western media as one of the most despised evils in today's world, the notorious "Islamic Fundamentalism." The reason for their extreme aversion is based on the fact that it is only Islam and its revolutionary and dynamic interpretation that poses a real challenge to secularism - the system of collective life that was born in Europe but which has come to dominate the entire globe.

What is secularism? Any number of religions can be accommodated under a secular system, provided no demand is made regarding the application of religious criteria in defining social, economic, and political policies. The selection

of goals and the utilization of means in all collective affairs must not be inspired by any form of religious teaching; rather, such policy decisions should be taken only on the basis of human pragmatic thought and majority opinion. Religion under a secular system is demoted to a personal and private affair of the individual. Thus, everyone is totally free concerning his metaphysical beliefs, rituals for worship, and social customs; the state won't interfere in any of these. At the same time, religion must not intrude or intervene in the running of the state either. Such a concept is, of course, diametrically opposed to the basic teaching of Islam.

The Holy Quran describes Islam as Deen al-Haq, or the true way of life. The very connotation of the word Deen - as contrasted with "religion" - is a declaration of war against secularism. This is because the word religion is commonly used in a rather narrow sense, its scope being limited to a set of dogmas, some rituals for worship, and a number of social customs to celebrate important life-events.



Deen, on the other hand, can be understood through following steps:

The basic definition of Deen is reward. (Al-Fatiha : 3)

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Reward is always on the basis of some laws. If anyone abides by the laws, he will be given good reward and in case of their violations, he will be punished.

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Laws are there to support a system and the system is known by the one who has the absolute authority and command.

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the value of a system exists till the time it is obeyed.

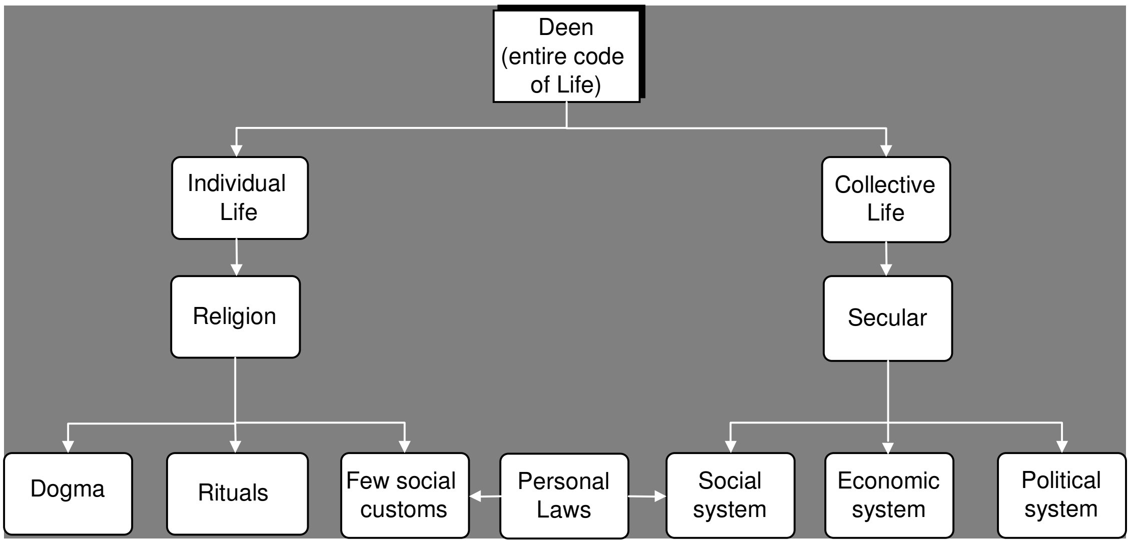
Hence, Deen is a system of life in which human beings consciously surrender themselves to the sovereignty of a higher authority, and live a life of total obedience under the system of that higher authority, in order to gain rewards from it and to save themselves from its punishment.

If the king has the absolute say and is being obeyed completely then the system is known as Deen al-Malik (Yousuf:76) – King's system.

"….He could not take his brother by the ***law of the king*** *(as a slave)…."*

When the term Deen is used for Islam, it obviously means a system of life where Almighty Allah (SWT) is worshipped and obeyed, not just in the narrow religious sense, but in a manner that includes all aspects of human life.

"And you see that the people enter ***Allâh's Deen*** *(Islâm) in crowds".* (An-Nasr : 2)



Let us compare secularism with Islamic system. There is no guidance provided by the non-Islamic system at individual level. Whereas, Islam provides complete guidance at individual level, as well as at collective level.

> *"This day, i have perfected your Deen for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your Deen"* (5:3)

Islam is based on, and rooted in, a well-integrated set of beliefs describing the nature of ultimate reality, meaning of human life, and the final destiny. In addition to this essential faith or Iman, modes of worship (i.e., Salat, Zakat, Saum, and Hajj) and various social customs are also indispensable and integral parts of Islam.

The non Islamic system provides popular sovereignty <u>at political level</u> of the collective sphere of life. People are sovereign and can make any laws even if they clash with the divine laws. God has nothing to do with their collective life affairs. This is the first time in the history of mankind that man has taken out God from their collective lives. <u>At economic level</u>, the landmark of secular system is interest based economy in which a person owns everything. A person has free choice to spend/earn money the way he pleases. Interest based economy necessarily creates "haves and have nots". The one who is rich will remain

permanently rich and the one who is poor will remain permanently poor. Interest has a sister known as insurance with the help of which it is pretended that Allah is prevented from making the people poor. Through speculation, the economy is in the hands of few people. When ever, they want, they can suck blood of the masses. Whereas, at social level "freedom" is the catch word of secularism, and total freedom ultimately leads to unwed mothers, single parents and high rate of divorces in the society.

On the other hand, along with religious guidance, Islam also provides us all the relevant instructions regarding our social, economic, and political existence (generally considered to be the "secular" or "worldly" aspects of life), and this is what really distinguishes Islam from other religions, say, Christianity or Buddhism. The salient features of Islamic socio-politico-economic system are

At political level (no oppression)

- sovereignty (al-haakamiyya) belongs to Allah alone and for mankind is khilafat (Yousuf : 40, Bani-Israel : 111, Al-Kahf : 26)
- no legislation will be done repugnant to the Quran and the Sunnah. (An-Nisa : 59, Al Hujraat : 1)
  no authoritarianism, mutual consultation. (As-Shura : 38)
- makes a clear distinction between muslims and non-muslims. (At-Tawbah : 29)
- no theocracy. (At-Tawbah : 31)

At economic level (no exploitation)

- Allah owns everything (al-malik). (3:180, 63:7)
- Man is only a custodian. (57:7)
- controlled capitalism minus interest & gambling. (2:275, 2: 279, 5:91)

At social level (no discrimination)

- one creator (al-khaliq), everyone (by birth) is equal (4:1, 49:13)

- segregation of sexes. (24:31, 33:53, 33:59)
- unity of the human race - common origin of mankind from Adam and Eve, hence total equality between black, white, Arab, non-Arab etc.

Note:

"My choice of Mohammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was **the** only man in history who was supremely successful on both the **religious** and **secular levels**". by Dr. Michael Hart, the 100: a ranking of the most influential persons in the history. Page 33, 1978

Presently in all existing systems, collective life affairs are based on secularism and divine guidance has no relevance. This is shirk and in Quranic terms it is known as a system of **taghoot** (Evil and devil)

"....and they wish to go for judgment to the taghoot (those authorities which govern in violation of Allah's laws) while they have been ordered to reject them..." (4:60)

"...those who do not make decisions according to Allah's laws, are kafir" (5:44)
".... those who do not make decisions according to Allah's laws, are zalim (mushrik)" -(5:45)
"..... those who do not make decisions according to Allah's laws, are fasiq (disobedient") - (5:47)

According to these Quranic decrees, **at collective level**, the whole Muslim Ummah is kafir, fasiq and musrik (zalim)

The true way of life, Deen al-Haq, is not meant to survive submissively as a mere religion under the umbrella of secularism; instead the Holy Quran makes it abundantly clear that Islam is meant to dominate all domains of life and all man-made systems and ideologies. This puts a tremendous responsibility on our shoulders. The Quranic commands vis-à-vis human society, culture, law, economics, and politics are not given to us so that we may admire and praise them, but they are meant to be implemented and acted upon. This necessitates that the gulf between Faith and Power be removed, which obviously requires a revolution in the leadership so that - instead of fulfilling any un-Islamic agenda - it contributes towards the establishment of "God's Kingdom on earth". Without collective organizational power, a significant portion of Islam remains confined to the realm of theory only, and, as a result, all sorts of corruption, injustice, inequity and immorality are let loose on earth. To establish the Islamic state is not a one man's job. It requires a collective effort and this effort in Quranic terms is known as Jihad-fi-sabeelillah and without jihad-fi-sabeelillah **<u>there is no salvation from painful doom as stated in verse (61:10-11)</u>**

> *"O believers, shall I tell you, and guide you to a trade which will save you from a painful doom, that you believe in Allah and his messenger (p b u h) and that you strive hard (jihad) in the cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives: that will be better for you, if you but know."* (As-Saf: 10-11).

It's not that Islam cannot survive or support itself without political authority, but, in fact, it is the political authority that grows more and more corrupt unless it is subordinated to the commands of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

The struggle to establish the domination of Islam is one of our basic, though unfortunately forgotten, duties. The significance of this obligation is underscored by a tradition according to which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is reported to have said: "If a Muslim dies and he had neither participated in any

war for the cause of Almighty Allah (SWT) nor had he a desire to take part in such a war, then he dies in a state of a certain kind of nifaq (i.e., hypocrisy, and not of true faith)." A Muslim whose life is devoid of the Jihad to establish the system of Khilafah, and who lacks the longing and the deep-felt desire to participate in it and to sacrifice his life for this purpose, can certainly be a Muslim in the legal sense of the word but such a person cannot be a Momin in the sight of Almighty Allah (SWT). This is because true conviction or Iman, although itself a hidden and covert reality, necessarily manifests itself in the form of Jihad for the cause of Almighty Allah (SWT). This, according to the Holy Quran, is what defines a true believer.

> *"They alone are the believers who come to believe in Allah and His messenger and afterwards never doubt, and who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Only they are truthful and sincere. "*
> (Al-Hujurat 49:15)